



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN BHUMISUKTAM (ATHARVAVEDA-12/1)

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ABSTRACT

As we know that, the study of Vedas and understanding its meaning is a vast and complex process. Basically, the main reason for this complexity is the deviation of understanding the meaning of the ancient language. This is why Wiseman gives instructions to study of the Vedas along with the six Vedangas and Purans. There is no denying that as a result of this indication, the study of Vedas has been restricted to one area. In modern times, the poetic forms of various Suktam of the Vedas, Social Consciousness, Spiritual Consciousness, World Consciousness, and Environmental Awareness became the focus of discussion. Today, in the world there are many countries always active in protecting the balance of the environment. Although there was hardly any environmental thought during the Vedic period. Then people were not aware of the environment? In the answer of such question, it can be said that the people of Vedic period did not do anything to pollute the environment. It is also said that they did not think about the environment separately, accepted the environment as a part of their life. As a result, there is no question of environmental pollution. In this regard, it is not right to say that in the Vedic period, people were vigilant about environmental awareness, because they used to live and earn their living in the natural environment and they unconsciously valued and always protected the environment. In the Vedic literature such environmental suktams are, Bristisuktam, Nadisuktam, Vaksuktam and one of the main suktam is Prithivisuktam or Bhumisuktam.

INTRODUCTION

The Prithivisuktam described in the twelfth section of the Atharvaveda has achieved considerable importance in modern times, because of its environmental awareness. The science and technology of the modern age has free human life various deadly diseases on the other hand made life enjoyable in every aspect. Underneath this human welfare of science lies its curse of various forms of pollution. Environmental pollution is one of them. As a result, human have distanced themselves from the earth's soil, water, air, plants and animal, the reservoir of biodiversity. It can be said in one sentence that this environmental pollution is the result of industrial revolution. Due to this pollution, the living world is in crisis of existence today. According to Rabindranath- “দাও ফিরে সে অরণ্য নও এ নগর”, (Give us back the sylvan past, take away today's cities). So present days scientists have laid special importance on protecting the environment. Now various programs observed in the society to attract people's attention on environmental consciousness.

Discussion

The topic of discussion here is environmental consciousness according to Prithivisuktam or Bhumisuktam in Atharvaveda. In the first mantra the sage spoke about the world-

“सत्यं बृहदृतमुग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति ।
सा नो भूतस्य पत्न्युरुं लोकं पृथिवी नः कृणोतु” ॥ 12/1/1

It means great truth, formidable right, consecration, penance, highest knowledge, sacrifice behold this earth. Let her for us mistress of that is and what is to be, let the earth make for us

wide space. Here the sage mentions some basic features by worshipping the earth. Those are, great truth, formidable right, consecration, penance, highest knowledge, sacrifice – this basic elements behold the earth. The sage describes human action in a metaphorical form by describing these elements and these human actions provide stability to the earth. The sage's respect for the earth has mentioned in various mantras. The topography of the earth is different, some are elevated mountains and some are plains. By plowing this land, people make the earth fertile. Humans are able to hold life. The earth bears the herbs of various virtues and life-giving medicines- ‘नाना वीर्या ओषधीर्या बिभर्ति पृथिवी नः प्रथतां राध्यतां नः’ ॥ 12/1/2. Apart from these, water is the main component for sustaining life. Without this element, agriculture and impossible to survive of every single being. So the sage prays to the earth for first drinking water- ‘सा नो भूमिः पूर्वपेये दद्यातु’ ॥ 12/1/3

An ecosystem is a significant process within the environment. It is a geographic area where plants, animals, and other organisms, as well as weather and landscape, work together to form a bubble of life. Ecosystems contain biotic or living, parts, as well as abiotic factors or nonliving parts. Biotic factors include plants, animals, and other organisms. The sage has mentioned indirectly about this ecosystem in various mantras-

“यस्याश्चतस्रः प्रदिशः पृथिव्या यस्यामन्त्रं कृष्टयः संबभूवुः ।
या बिभर्ति बहुधा प्राणदेजत्सा नो भूमि गोष्पयन्ने दद्यातु” ॥ 12/1/4

The sage said that not only human beings but also all living beings who have live and motion, deriver their life by cultivating the land that surrounds the earth. Here he has pointed out the

words of all living beings. Particularly the sage prayed to the earth to protect the living world by providing food and cattle.

The sage of the Bhumisuktam special emphasis on stay together on the earth. In this world, not only the present population but also our ancestors once spent their lives in happiness and sorrows. The sage has spoken of the struggle of good and evil forces in a metaphorical form as the struggle of the gods and the demons. It is said in Mahabharata about good and evil- 'यतो धर्मः ततो जयः'। This eternal words have kept Indian civilization alive for ages. However, this earth is not just a human-shaped earth, but also cattle, birds, wild animal, aquatic animals etc. lives there together. They are also equal partakers of this earth. One of the assets of this poem is to show the intimacy of man with nature. Frequently looking at this nature the poet points out the importance of co-location.

The midwife form of the earth beautifully mentioned by the poet in Bhumisuktam. This earth is a quarry of natural resources. The earth is full of all the natural resources of rivers, seas, forests, and the gold, oil, coal, minerals that exist beneath it. This is why the poet calls the earth 'हिरण्यवक्षा'। The poet said that 'विश्वंभरा वसुधानी प्रतिष्ठा हिरण्यवक्षा जगतो निवेशानी'। 12/1/6. The earth holds the fire as a Terrance of civilized society. Hence, the sage referred to the earth as a firehouse 'अग्निवासा'। The earth which is a reservoir of great wealth and great power, the gods sleeplessly protect this earth- 'यां रक्षन्त्यस्वाप्ना विश्वदनीं देवा भूमिं पृथिवीमप्रमादम्'। 12/1/7. The poet has depicted the perfect balance of clouds, rain, sun, light and darkness in this habitable earth. These are not illusions but embellished representations of truth. The poet has only uttered the words of the ancestors which is mention in RegVeda between 1/90/6 to 1/90/8 mantras-

“मधु वाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः। माध्वीर्नः सन्तोषधीः॥
मधु वाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः। माध्वीर्नः सन्तोषधीः”। 1/90/6

It means -The winds bring sweet (rewards) to the sacrificer, the rivers bring sweet (waters), may the herbs yield sweetness to us.

“मधु नक्तमुतोषसो मधुमत्पार्थिवं रजः। मधु द्यौरस्तु नः पिता॥
मधु नक्तमुतोषसो मधुमत्पार्थिवं रजः। मधु द्यौरस्तु नः पिता”॥ 1/90/7

The sage refers -may night and morning be sweet; may the region of the earth be full of sweetness; may the protecting heaven be sweet to us.

“मधुमान्नो वनस्पतिर्मधुमाँ अस्तु सूर्यः। माध्वीर्गावो भवन्तु नः॥
मधुमान्नो वनस्पतिर्मधुमाँ अस्तु सूर्यः। माध्वीर्गावो भवन्तु नः”॥ 1/90/8

The sage said that, May Vanaspati be possessed of sweetness towards us; may the sun be imbued with sweetness; may the cattle be sweet to us. We all want to be enlightened by the bright midwife of this earth.

Cosmology is described in the Bhumisuktam. It is mention in Nasadiyasuktam of Regveda-

“नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमा परो यत्।
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्ममः किमासीद्गहनं गभीरम्”॥ 10/129/1

The sage mentioned, Then even non-existence was not there, nor existence, There was no air then, nor the space beyond it. What covered it? Where was it? In whose keeping? Was there then cosmic fluid, in depths unfathomed? Cosmology is shrouded in mystery. Scientists in modern times are always active in solving this mystery. In this perspective the sage said in Bhumisuktam-

“याण्विडधिं सलिलमग्रा आसीद् यां मायाभिरन्वचरन्मनीषिणः।
यस्या हृदयं परमे व्योमन् तस्येनावततममतं पृथिव्याः।
सा नो भूमिस्त्विर्षा बलं राष्ट्रं दधातुत्तमम्”॥ 12/1/8

It means the earth who, in the beginning was water on (in) the ocean, on whom the intelligent (persons) moved after with maya (magic), the earth whose immortal heart covered with truth exists in the highest firmament- let that earth assign us brilliance, strength and in the best royalty. Same words also seen in Vaksuktam- 'मम योनिरप्स्वन्तः समुद्रे'। Rgveda 10/125/7. For thousands of years in this green earth has been flowing with joy- 'यस्यामापः परिचराः समानीरहोरात्रे अप्रमादं क्षरन्ति'। 12/1/9. The earth is always protecting living beings as a mother. Humans produce food and medicine by cultivating the earth's soil. This earth continues to protect all living beings with her sprinkle splendor- 'सा नो भूमिर्भूरिधारा पयो दुहामथो उक्षतु वर्चसा'। 12/1/9

Today, we have been taking multiple initiatives to save the earth, inspired by environmental consciousness. Science ancient times the ancient sage has been said to protect the earth. It is said in 1/12/10 mantra that Asvins measures the earth and built it- 'यामश्विनावविमाताम्'। Here the sage metaphorically refers to the working people. We know that skilled people have been building this earth multiples way science ancient times so far. The sage has been declared the victory of this working people. Due to the result of action of these working people, we get many benefits of natural resources from the earth. The sage said in 12/1/10 mantra- 'सा नो भूमिर्वि सृजतां माता पुत्राय मे पयः'।

The sage in Bhumisukta describes the endless beauty of the natural environment. The surface of the earth is not equal everywhere, it is high in some places and flat in some places, some places are full of green crops, somewhere is flowing clear streams. There are many mountains in this earth, there are snow-covered mountains, the sage mentioned about forest and he also prayed that the forest should be pleasant- 'गिर्यस्ते पर्वता हिमवन्तोऽरण्यं ते पृथिवि स्योनमस्तु'। 12/1/11. Such Vedic mantra is the root of the idea of sanctuary that we see in the modern age. The poet seen the world different colours. The sage presented himself as a nature-loving poet in Bhumisukta. He mention the different colors of the earth. The earth is sometimes brown, purple or red- 'बभ्रुं कृष्णं रोहिणीं विश्वरूपां ध्रुवां भूमिं पृथिवीमिन्द्रगुप्ताम्'। 12/1/11. It is needless to say that the poet is fascinated by the natural environment created in the spring. It is our duty to protect the entire environment and the earth. Earth's existence depends on the balance of the environment. That is why this world has been protected by the Gods since ancient times-

‘महास्त्वेन्द्रा रक्षत्यप्रमादम्’। 12/1/18.

We have seen adjacent relationship of man with nature in Prithivisuktam. The sage said- “माता भूमिः पुत्रो अहं पृथिव्याः। पर्जन्यः पिता स उ नः पिपर्तुः”। 12/1/12. Here the sage mention the earth as mother and refer himself the the child of the earth. The sweetest relationship in the wrold is the relationship between mother and child. The right of that relationship, the sage pray close refuge with earth. The sage of Regveda Atri mention this mother-son relationship in the 5/42/16 mantras- ‘मा नो माता पृथिवी’। Because of this Parjannya Dev is our father, for the sake of food. The Parjannya Dev makes earth full of green grain through providing rains. The sage refers him as a father. This mantra amazes us with the intimate relationship of man with nature.

CONCLUSION

A poet conscious about the earth of good and evil, ultimately therefore seeing all that is sweet in the world, rejoices in it- “यद्ध दामि मधुमत्ते वदामि यदिक्षे तद् वनन्ति मा”। 12/1/58. These true poets of nature ancient Atharva or, Rabindranath, Bibhutibhushan, Jeebananda, Wordsworth of the West, Keats, they revered every form of nature so heard the words of her soul ringing in their hearts—so they were transcendent truth-seekers. Impressed by the affection of love, these poets say – ‘नादत्ते प्रियमण्डनापि स्नेहेन या पल्लवम्’। The entire Prithivishuktam is therefore a poem of nature-human self-bonding. A poem looking back at nature, a poem of reverence in contrast to advanced creation - a poem of creation. This immortal poem, twinned in the coexistence of environment and aesthetics, there fore it is even today- ‘न ममार न जीर्यति’।

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